

WE CLAIM:

1 1. A device unitarily molded into a sharps container adapted to remove a scalpel blade  
2 from a scalpel handle, each blade having a rear edge which abuts a rear surface of a  
3 neck of the handle in a locking relationship, the handle further having a narrow inserted  
4 portion provided at a front end thereof and grooves provided along the periphery of the  
5 inserted portion, the blade also having a slot for receiving the grooves of the inserted  
6 portion of the handle, the grooves being slidable in the slot and passing through a wider  
7 opening at a portion of the slot to permit the blade to be removed from the inserted  
8 portion, the device comprising:

9 (a) a generally rectangular, vertical and broad opening defined at a bottom edge  
10 by a lowest and widest edge of an upward ramp and at left and right edges by  
11 edges of, respectively, left and right sidewalls, where the top edge of the  
12 broad opening is open;

13 (b) the upward ramp extending upward and narrowing backward of the sidewalls  
14 from the lowest and widest edge to an uppermost and narrowest edge;

15 (c) a generally horizontal top ramp extending further back from the uppermost  
16 and narrowest edge of the upward ramp, the top ramp having a left to right  
17 width about that of the uppermost and narrowest edge of the upward ramp;

18 (d) a right wall extending up and bounding a right side of the upward ramp;

19 (e) a left wall bounding a lower part of the left side of the upward ramp;

20 (f) a flexible wall fixed at one end near a backside of the left sidewall and  
21 extending freely therefrom to a notched end, where a right side of the  
22 notched end bounds at least part of an upper left part of the upward ramp;  
23 and

24 (g) the device is adapted so that:

25 (i) a tip of a bladed scalpel may be inserted past the broad opening to force  
26 a bottom edge of the blade to slide up the upward ramp and come to  
27 rest on the top ramp; and

28 (ii) the right side of the notched end springs against the rear surface of the  
29 neck of the blade behind the rear edge of the blade, whereafter the  
30 handle is withdrawn and the rear edge of the blade is engaged in the  
31 notched end.

1 2. The device of claim 1 wherein the left wall has a substantially lower vertical height  
2 than the right wall.

1 3. The device of claim 2 wherein the flexible wall has a vertical height from at least, at a  
2 lowest edge, a lowest edge of the left wall to, at a highest edge, about the same height  
3 as the right wall.

1 4. The device of claim 3 wherein the flexible wall and the left wall in combination are  
2 adapted to prevent slippage to the left of a scalpel inserted into the device.

1 5. The device of claim 4 wherein the right wall is adapted to prevent slippage to the  
2 right of a scalpel inserted into the device.

1 6. The device of claim 1 wherein the top ramp has a generally rectangular, vertical and  
2 narrow opening defined at a bottom edge by a transition of the upward ramp to the top  
3 ramp and at left and right edges by edges of, respectively, left and right top towers,  
4 where the top edge of the narrow opening is open.

1 7. The device of claim 6 wherein the left wall has a substantially lower vertical height  
2 than the right wall.

1 8. The device of claim 7 wherein the flexible wall has a vertical height from at least, at a  
2 lowest edge, a lowest edge of the left wall to, at a highest edge, about the same height  
3 as the right wall.

1 9. The device of claim 1 wherein the flexible wall has a greatest vertical height at its  
2 attachment and narrows to a smallest vertical height at the notched end.

1 10. A device adapted to remove a scalpel blade from a scalpel handle, each blade  
2 having a rear edge which abuts a rear surface of a neck of the handle in a locking  
3 relationship, the device comprising:

4 (a) a broad opening defined at a bottom edge by a lowest and widest edge of an  
5 upward ramp and at left and right edges by edges of, respectively, left and  
6 right sidewalls, where the top edge of the broad opening is open;

7 (b) the upward ramp extending upward and narrowing backward of the sidewalls  
8 from the lowest and widest edge to an uppermost and narrowest edge;

9 (c) a right wall extending up and bounding a right side of the upward ramp;

10 (d) a left wall bounding a lower part of the left side of the upward ramp;

11 (e) a flexible wall fixed at one end and extending freely therefrom to a notched  
12 end, where a right side of the notched end bounds at least part of an upper  
13 left part of the upward ramp; and

14 (f) the device is adapted so that:

15 (i) a tip of a bladed scalpel may be inserted past the broad opening to force a  
16 bottom edge of the blade to slide up the upward ramp; and

17 (ii) the right side of the notched end springs against the rear surface of the  
18 neck of the blade behind the rear edge of the blade, whereafter the handle is  
19 withdrawn and the rear edge of the blade is engaged in the notched end.

1 11. The device of claim 10 wherein a generally horizontal top ramp extends further  
2 back from the uppermost and narrowest edge of the upward ramp, the top ramp having  
3 a left to right width about that of the uppermost and narrowest edge of the upward  
4 ramp.

1 12. The device of claim 11 wherein the top ramp has a left to right width about that of  
2 the uppermost and narrowest edge of the upward ramp.

1 13. The device of claim 10 wherein the left wall has a substantially lower vertical height  
2 than the right wall.

1 14. The device of claim 13 wherein the flexible wall has a vertical height from at least,  
2 at a lowest edge, a lowest edge of the left wall to, at a highest edge, about the same  
3 height as the right wall.

1 15. The device of claim 10 wherein the flexible wall is fixed at one end near a backside  
2 of the left sidewall and extends freely therefrom to the notched end.